

**SOP 138-15HV**  
**SCAFFOLD AND LADDER REGULATIONS**  
**VA Hudson Valley Health Care System**  
**Issue Date: February 25, 2015**  
**Update: February 25, 2018**

1. **PURPOSE:** To delineate guidelines for the safe use of scaffolds and ladders.
2. **POLICY:** Engineering Service has established mechanisms to ensure the safe use of scaffolds and ladders
3. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**
  - a. **The Chief, Engineering Service** is responsible for the implementation of this policy
  - b. **The Supervisors** are responsible for:
    - 1) Insuring that work being performed on scaffolds and ladders adheres to the safe practices and procedures listed below.
    - 2) Ensuring that all ladders and scaffolds are properly maintained.
  - c. **Employees** are responsible for:
    - 1) Inspecting scaffolds and ladders prior to and after every use and for reporting unsafe conditions to their Supervisor.
    - 2) Employing the safe practices and procedures listed below.
4. **PROCEDURES:**
  - a. Employees will **perform** their work in conformance with universally accepted and **established safety practices**.
  - b. **Negligence** or willful violation of the regulations as contained in this standard operating procedure will be considered just cause for disciplinary action as deemed appropriate and applicable.
  - c. **Rolling Scaffolds:**
    - 1) Lock all caster brakes when the scaffold is in a working position.
    - 2) Make sure that the height of the working platform is no more than three to four times the smaller base dimension.
    - 3) Have and utilize sufficient help when rolling the scaffold.
    - 4) On a rough surface, never move a work platform with anyone on it. Never move an occupied work platform sideways. All personnel must be off a work platform before it is moved in any direction, no matter how short the distance.
    - 5) Do not fully extend leg-leveling screws.
    - 6) Take precautions to prevent the scaffold from being struck by trucks or other moving equipment. Appropriate warning signs will be posted or an individual(s) will be assigned to stand guard in the immediate area, and warn all individuals.
    - 7) Always use guardrails around all exposed sides of working platforms. These guardrails should be between 36 and 42 inches above the platform.
    - 8) Make sure that working platforms are equipped with special fittings or cleats or have other provisions to prevent their movement.

- 9) Toe boards are required for all scaffolds over 10 feet high. They should be at least 1 x 6 inches and installed tightly to the platform. When scaffolds are erected above walks or work areas, the space between toe board and railing should be screened.

**d. Ladders- Placement:**

- 1) Place a ladder so that the horizontal distance from the base to the vertical plane of the support is approximately one-fourth the ladder length between supports.
- 2) Do not use ladders in a horizontal position as runways or as scaffolds.
- 3) Do not place ladder in front of a door that opens toward the ladder unless the door is locked, blocked or guarded, or an individual is posted to prevent others from going through the doorway.
- 4) Never place a ladder against a window pane or sash.
- 5) Place a portable ladder so that both side rails have secure footing. Provide solid footing on soft ground to prevent the ladder from sinking.
- 6) Place ladder feet on a substantial and level base, not on moveable objects.
- 7) Never lean a ladder against unsafe backing such as boxes or barrels.
- 8) When ladder is used for access to high places, securely lash or otherwise fasten the ladder to prevent slipping.
- 9) Secure both bottom and top to prevent displacement when using ladder for access to a scaffold, and extend the ladder side rails at least 3-1/2 feet above the top landing.
- 10) Do not place a ladder close to live electric wiring or against any operational piping (acid, chemical, sprinkler system) where damage may be done.
- 11) Ascending or Descending Ladders:
  - (a) Hold on with both hands when going up or down. If material must be handled, use a rope.
  - (b) Always face the ladder when ascending or descending.
  - (c) Never slide down a ladder.
  - (d) Be sure shoes are not greasy, muddy, or slippery before climbing.
  - (e) Do not climb higher than the third rung from the top on straight or extension ladders, the second tread from the top on stepladders.
  - (f) Whenever any individual is ascending or descending a ladder, the ladder will be properly footed.

**e. Other Safe Practices:**

- 1) Do not use makeshift ladders or utilize other devices such as chairs, tables, counter tops, etc., to gain access to high places.
- 2) Make sure stepladder is fully opened before you start to climb it.
- 3) Before using a ladder, inspect it for defects. Examine the rungs, or rails for burrs and the rope for deterioration.
- 4) Never use a defective ladder. Tag or mark such ladder for repair or destruction as applicable, and immediately notify your Supervisor to have it taken out of service.
- 5) Keep ladders clean and free from dirt and grease, which might conceal defects.
- 6) Do not use ladders during a strong windstorm, except in an emergency, and then only when they are securely tied.
- 7) Do not leave ladders unattended, unless anchored at the top and bottom.
- 8) Do not use metal ladders around electrical circuits or in places where they may come in contact with live circuits, since metal ladders are electrical conductors.

9) Inspect all ladders immediately before each use for any possible damage/defects. All items found with damage/defects, the individuals utilizing the ladder will initiate immediate corrective action.

**5. REFERENCES:**

Occupational Safety and Health Standard 29 CFR 1920-1926.

**6. RESCISSIONS:**

SOP 138-15HV, Scaffold and Ladder Regulations, dated February 24, 2012.

//s//

JOHN CLIFFE

Chief, Engineering Service

Originator: 138/JD

Distribution: WEB